

Wake County Transitional Plan to Address Closure of Dorothea Dix Hospital

Expected Completion time: Fall 2010

In preparation and response to the impending closure of Dorothea Dix Hospital (March, 2008), Wake County will launch a comprehensive package of 9 short- and long-term initiatives, including:

1. Contract with Holly Hill Hospital

Starting in December 2007, Holly Hill Hospital will make psychiatric beds available for Wake County patients. Holly Hill Hospital will build a special 44-bed unit to admit Wake County psychiatric patients. This project will be completed within the next 18 months.

2. Temporary Beds at Dorothea Dix Campus

Wake County has negotiated a special agreement with the State to operate a 24-bed unit to serve County residents. Wake County will pay DHHS to operate this unit for about three years. The unit will be a satellite of the new Central Regional Hospital and will serve low acuity patients expected to stay for 5-7 days. DHHS will pay for an additional 36 beds.

3. Collaboration with the Sheriff/ Mental Health Service Delivery System for Inmates

Sheriff's Office and Human Services staff will plan how to effectively assess jail inmates and make referrals to community resources prior to release. Effective Jan. 1, 2008, Wake County Human Services (WCHS) will assign four mental health professionals to work exclusively with mentally ill inmates. Two full time staff will be out-posted at the detention facilities and two will help provide/coordinate post-release services. The Sheriff is also secured additional funding to provide patient transportation to the new hospital in Butner.

4. Two Housing Programs

- **Housing Vouchers for the Mentally Ill:** \$192,000 from the Affordable Housing Budget will be used to provide rental payments for 25 homeless mentally ill people for one year. Wake County will make rent payments for referred clients and the service providers will be responsible for all services.
- **10-20 New Housing Units for the Mentally Ill:** WCHS is trying to identify \$500,000 from its budget to be matched with \$500,000 from the affordable housing budget to provide up to 20 units of housing for mentally ill people. The units, ideally at multiple sites, would be owned and operated by a private landlord and used as short-term housing.

5. Mental Health Forums-Behavioral Health Collaborative

The first forum is scheduled for Dec. 17, 2007, at WakeMed. Convened by the Wake County Area Director of MH/DD/SA, the forum will convene 150 providers and stakeholders. The intention is to start building a collaborative of public and private providers. We plan to schedule another forum in the middle of next year.

6. MH/DD/SA/ Consumer Fair at the Commons on January 15, 2008, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Special outreach strategy to engage adults with mental illness (MI) or mental illness and substance abuse (MI/SA) who might be disconnected from services. This fair will focus on access to services. The intent is to help those left behind in the midst of the confusion created by service divestiture and the impending closure of Dorothea Dix Hospital.

7. Special Substance Abuse (SA) Initiative: A Jump Start for an SA System of Care

Up to \$500,000 will be spent in a special substance abuse initiative. Currently, over 50 % of all admissions to Dorothea Dix hospital are dually diagnosed or SA only cases. The initiative will be the first step in closing gaps in the system. Resources will be managed with a co-investment approach. WCHS will aggressively look for partnerships.

8. LME Automation / Investing in Technology to promote quality and coordination

Over \$1 M dollars will be invested in a new automation system for the LME, which will help with patient and service tracking, utilization review, monitoring of quality of services, and contract and fiscal management. This system will help provide better financial oversight of more than \$20 M dollars currently spent in contracts.

9. \$20 Million Investment on a New Mental Health Facility

Wake County is investing \$ 20 million for a new Mental Health Facility. This is a 32-bed Psychiatric facility that will offer Crisis and Assessment services, 16 short-term psychiatric beds, and 8 secured and 8 non-secured detoxification beds. Almost all funds have been identified, and a panel has been convened to select the architect. The ABC board is also helping with this investment.